

Hootentown Bridge
Spanning James River on County Route 133,
6.2 miles east of Hurley, 3.7 miles south
of the Stone-Christian County Line
Jamesville Vicinity
Stone County
Missouri

HAER No. MO-48

HAER
MO,
105-JAMVI.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Hootentown Bridge

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Location: Spanning James River on County Route 133, 6.2 miles east of Hurley, 3.7 miles south of the Stone-Christian County line
Jamesville vicinity, Stone County, Missouri

UTM: Eastern End: 15.4657000E/408800N

Western End: 15.465640E/4088020N

Quad: Hurley

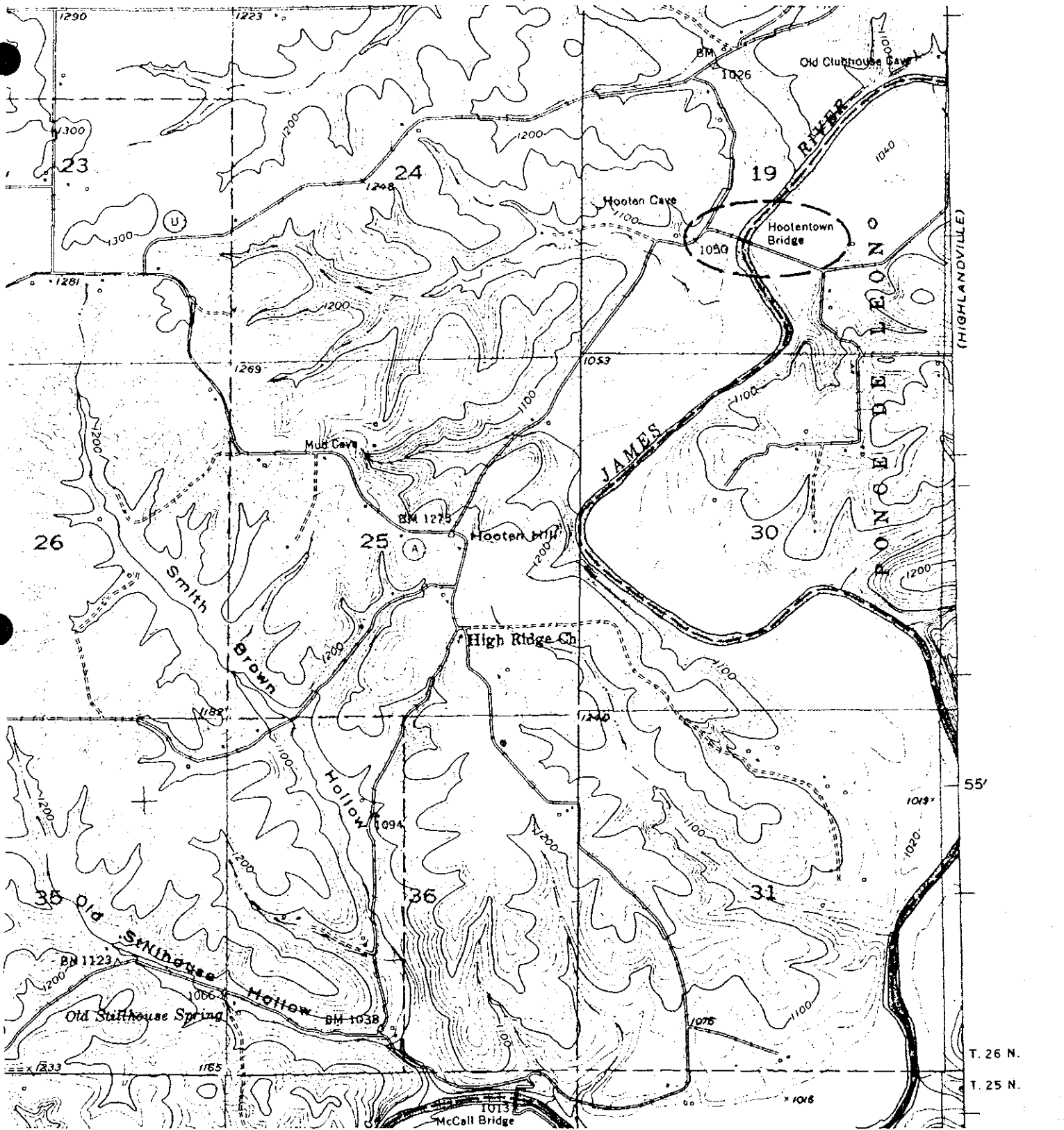
Date of Construction: 1910; moved and reassembled 1929-1930

Present Owner: Stone County
Stone County Courthouse
Galena, Missouri

Present Use: Vehicular bridge; to be replaced by a new vehicular bridge.
Projected date of removal: Summer 1989

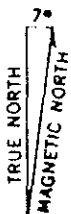
Significance: Hootentown Bridge is a double span, steel Parker through truss bridge, built by the Western Bridge Company of Harrisonville, Missouri.

Historian: Kerry C. McGrath
Center for Archaeological Research
Southwest Missouri State University
May 1989



HURLEY, MO.
N3652.5-W9322.5/7.5

1955



APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION, 1955

SCALE 1:24000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETTIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

HURLEY QUADRANGLE
MISSOURI
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



I. HISTORY

A. Stone County, 1900-1930

In 1900, Stone County was a sparsely populated, relatively undeveloped area. Two-thirds of the county's rugged terrain was forested. Hamlets such as Jamesville, situated approximately two miles northeast of the Hootentown Bridge, consisted of a post office, a store, and, possibly, a small industry (grist mill, broom factory) and served as the commercial and communication centers for the bulk of the population. (1) Their distribution reflected nineteenth century settlement patterns which had focused on arable land along major waterways in the county, the White River and its tributary--the James River. (2) At the turn of the century, most Stone County residents were farmers still engaged in subsistence or pioneer agriculture. Commercial production evolved around livestock, which were driven overland to markets and shipping points located to the north along the Missouri Pacific Railroad. (3) Ultimate responsibility for public roads within the county lay with the Stone County court, which also supervised several ferries across the White and James Rivers. (4)

Change came with railroad construction. Between 1903 and 1907, the St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern Railway extended a line from northern Arkansas through Stone County, built a spur line north to the city of Springfield in Greene County, and established stations at Browns Spring, Hurley, Crane, Galena, and Reeds Spring. (5) Railroad construction attracted lumbermen, since it provided an immediate market for ties cut from local timber and a means of shipping the lumber out of the region. Ruth, now Reeds Spring, became the tie distribution center and a boom town whose growth was fueled by the burgeoning lumber industry. (6)

The railroad and lumber industry brought a cash economy to Stone County, providing the impetus for agricultural expansion and growth of the rural canning industry. With rail service, Stone County farmers had direct access to expanding regional and national markets. Production of perishable commodities, such as dairy products, vegetables, and fruit, became economically feasible, particularly in northern Stone County. (7) Often, the produce from truck gardens (tomatoes, strawberries) was processed locally. By 1914, Stone County was dotted with canneries. (8) Most were small family enterprises, handling the produce from farms within a radius of eight to ten miles and operating only when prices were high. They fit into an economic niche created by spatial and temporal conditions, taking advantage of cheap produce and labor from nearby farms and the absence of rigorous competition from other producing areas. (9) The lumber boom had affected the resident agricultural population, in that tie hacking provided subsistence farmers with seasonal employment and a cash income. (10) In addition, the lumber industry fostered agricultural expansion in Stone County. Cut-over timber land was converted into small farms, which lumber companies sold to their employees or by mail order. Between 1910 and 1920, Stone County had a net loss of only seven farms; whereas counties outside the timber area had substantial decreases in the number of farms. (11)

Apparently, the economic changes associated with the completion of the railroad and the lumber boom, produced a demand for improvement of the county's transportation network and provided the funds for bridge construction. In 1910, Stone County began their bridge building program with the construction of a steel bridge across the James River at Galena, the county seat. The Western Bridge Company of Harrisonville, Missouri, erected the multi-span bridge structure between November 16, 1910 and May 3, 1911, at a cost of \$11,596.00. (12) Their contract with the county called for construction of the bridge, as well as maintenance for a period of four years, following its completion. (13)

Between 1913 and 1915, the county court developed plans for additional bridges, primarily across the James River. (14) The James River Valley contained some of the county's most prosperous farms. However, the river which bisects the northern two-thirds of the county was an obstacle to travel. The depth of the channel, combined seasonal fluctuations in flow meant that during much of the year fords were hazardous or impassible.

In 1913, the Stone County Court ordered the county engineer to develop plans for four steel bridges and advertise for bids for their construction. Two of the bridges would span the James River at Jamesville and Hooten Ford, while the other two bridges would be built in the vicinity of Cape Fair at Club House Ford on the James and across Flat Creek. (15) Placing bridges across the James River in the northeastern corner of the county (Hooten Ford and Jamesville) would facilitate east-west movement and provide access to railroad stations at Hurley and Crane. The bridges in the Cape Fair vicinity would serve a similar function for the southern part of the county. However, the bidding was postponed because the court had "received notice that various companies are proposing to build dams across the river in the near future and might soon render the bridges useless if built now." (16)

A year later, in 1914, the county court resumed its efforts to bridge Stone County's rivers. Six bridges were to be built, four across the James (including one in the Jamesville vicinity and one at Hooten Ford) and two across the White River. (17) By September, when the county engineer had completed his plans and submitted cost estimates, funding was available for construction of only two of the six bridges.

With one judge dissenting, the court approved construction of a bridge across the James River near the mouth of Finley Creek (Jamesville) and a second bridge across the James River at Cape Fair. (18) Although the county engineer was ordered to prepare plans and advertise bids, court records suggest that neither bridge was constructed at that time. (19)

The effort to build additional bridges was renewed in 1915, when the Stone County Court determined a "public necessity" for certain bridges across the James and White rivers. These were to be steel bridges with concrete piers and abutments, built with county funds by the lowest and best bidder. (20) Apparently, two were to be placed on proposed state highways, for their locations are described "as across the White River at or near where the state road survey crosses" and "at the James River where the state road survey crosses near

of the James River" [Cape Fair vicinity].(21) The third bridge would cross the James River at McCall Ford. (22) Ultimately, one bridge was built over the White River. However, until the late 1920s, the county apparently did not consider additional bridge projects across the James.

Although the reasons remain obscure, political factors probably contributed to the court's inability to implement additional bridge construction. Traditionally, counties in the area had been reluctant to expend money on roads and bridges. (23) Several different bridge sites were considered between 1913 and 1915, suggesting that local groups or individuals were promoting particular sites. To maintain peace in the county, the court may have deliberately chosen not to build bridges rather than favoring a particular area through bridge construction.

Also, it is likely that insufficient tax revenues underlay Stone County's failure to build additional bridges across the James after 1911. When the lumber boom ended, small farmers in the county were able to maintain a minimum cash income by means of a subsistence strategy that combined livestock production with truck gardening. (24) Local canneries created an immediate market for garden produce, such as strawberries and tomatoes. These could be successfully grown on small farms, since they required little capital investment and, while labor intensive, all aspects of production could be undertaken by family members. For small farmers operating at a subsistence level, the sale of the crop provided a cash income, as did the wages that women and girls earned at the local canneries during the canning season. (25) Nevertheless, this type of farming operation did not generate the kind of tax revenue needed to underwrite the county's bridge construction program. In 1935, the average annual income for Stone County's 1,200 growers was \$125.00, while that of the 2,500 cannery workers was \$40.00. (26)

Commercial truck gardening in Stone County intensified during the 1920s with tomatoes becoming the primary crop. Between 1919 and 1929, Stone County doubled the acreage devoted to tomato production and, in the 1923, the county ranked second in output of canned tomatoes in Missouri. (27) There were over thirty canneries in Stone County devoted exclusively to tomatoes and, during this period, they were supplying national grocery chains, such as Kroegers and Safeway. (28) By the end of the decade, roughly half of the county's population was involved in some phase of the tomato industry. (29) Expansion of truck gardening and the output of local canneries again set in motion a demand for improvements of farm to market roads within the county.

The advent of motorized vehicles made all-weather roads and highway bridges a necessity. In Missouri, the number of registered automobiles increased by 254% between 1920 and 1929, reflecting the statewide shift in transportation during that period. (30) A related development was the growth of tourism in areas such as Stone County. The James River was a major attraction for camping, floating, and fishing. Initially centered around Galena, the industry eventually involved smaller communities along the James River, such as

Jamesville, which became popular "put in" locations for fishermen and canoeists. (31) At some point in the mid-twentieth century, tourist cabins and a store were built on the east bank of the James River, adjacent to Hootentown Bridge. (32) In 1927, the State Highway Commission authorized funding and construction of the "Y" bridge on State Highway 3 (now Highway 176). At the time, this was the highway commission's largest bridge project and may have been undertaken in order to promote the growth of tourism in the area. (33)

With the advent of automotive traffic, the James River became even more difficult to traverse. Between 1910 and 1929, the only bridge crossing in Stone County was the "wagon Bridge" at Galena. For those living in the northeastern corner of Stone County (Jamesville and Hooten Ford), crossing the James River at Galena could entail a trip of over thirty miles. Consequently, in the late 1920s, residences of the Jamesville and Hooten Ford areas offered to underwrite part of the cost of bridge construction at these two locations. (34) Construction costs were further reduced by recycling the steel from the "wagon bridge" at Galena, which was dismantled following completion of the "Y" bridge. (35)

B. Construction Chronology

Formal planning for construction of the Hootentown Bridge began on February 4, 1929, when the Stone County Court approved placing two of the long, narrow spans from the old Galena bridge at the "Hootenville Ford." (36) O. K. Parsons, a private contractor from Crane, Missouri, was hired for the job of dismantling the wagon bridge at Galena. By the end of April 1929, his crew had removed the steel. (37) The demolition was front page news in the Crane Chronicle, and the article noted that the Bridge "may serve again in the capacity of short spans across smaller streams for the several sections have been kept intact and can easily be removed to sites where a steel bridge and a wooden floor will serve the traveling public." (38)

Later that year, the county used the spans in the construction of bridges at Jamesville and Hootentown. The Jamesville project was let in August 1929, and awarded to O. K. Parsons, the lowest bidder. (39) Construction began immediately, but was impeded by an accident that almost took the life of Parson's son. By the end of September, an article in the Crane Chronicle announced that the bridge and new road to it would be open for travel within a week. (40)

On December 2, 1929, A. N. Peters, county highway engineer, filed the following estimate on the bridge above "Hootentown Ford": (41)

131 cu. yds. concrete: 1-3.5 Miy - 581.64 sacks cement at \$0.80,
delivered = \$3.47 per cu. yd.

23 cu yds. concrete: 1-2.4 Miy - 132.64 sacks of cement at .80 cts,
delivered = \$4.60 per cu. yd.

Average	\$3.70 cu. yd.
Gravel and Sand delivered	\$2.50 per cu. yd.
Running and pouring	\$2.00 per cu. yd.
Forms	\$2.00 per cu. yd.
Rental of machinery and other extras	\$1.00

Total \$11.20

Cost of Piers	\$1,724.80
14208' flooring lumber - \$3.50 per 100	\$ 594.00
50 poles for falsework	\$ 100.00
Cleaning and painting bridge	\$ 160.00
Erecting steel	\$ 800.00
100 cu. yds. excavating - \$2.00 per yd.	\$ 200.00
Nails and wire	\$ 50.00
Insurance and extras	\$ 201.20
Bolts	\$ 50.00

Total \$3,880.00

Court records indicate that Peter's plans and specifications were approved by the court on December 3, 1929. (42) At that time, the court decided that the county should build the bridge rather than letting the project to a private contractor. To accomplish this, they decided to hire a "suitable and competent bridge superintendent" to oversee construction and have the county rent the machinery, tools, equipment and supplies needed for the project. (43) The court apparently had already identified the individual who would be hired as bridge superintendent; because during that session, they authorized the presiding judge and clerk to execute a contract with O. K. Parsons for his services as "assistant superintendent" and rental of his machinery and equipment for the bridge project. (44)

The Galena newspaper announced the impending bridge project in the following article:

"County court of Stone County met on Monday of this week and among other business made arrangements to erect a county bridge at Hooten Town. Two 140 foot spans of the old bridge at Galena will be used by the County and the Hooten Town vicinity have agreed to donate part of the cost of the bridge. It is said that 3 piers will be necessary for the new bridge. The work will be done under the direction of County Highway Engineer

A. K. [sic] Peters and O. K. Parsons of Crane. It is reported work will start this week and the bridge will be erected as rapidly as possible." (45)

The progress of construction is documented by the warrants issued between December 16, 1929, and March 3, 1930, to O. K. Parsons: December 16, 1929, \$582.35 for work on Hootentown Bridge; December 30, 1929, \$716.58 for labor and material; January 13, 1930, \$546.26 for labor and material; February 3, 1930, \$724.51 for work and material; March 3, 1930, \$1,434.23 for work and completion. (46) Apparently, the two spans used for the Hootentown Bridge were moved intact from Galena. Peter's estimate suggests that the job also involved construction of the extant earthen approaches, concrete pier and abutments, as well as refurbishing the trusses. After the spans were placed on the piers, the work crew installed a new wooden deck, and painted the bridge. The work was completed by March 3, 1930, and duly noted in the Galena newspaper. (47)

The final cost of the bridge, based on warrants issued to Parsons, was \$4,004.33. Unfortunately, the identities of local residents who promoted the project and contributed to it have not been determined; nor is the amount of their contribution known. The winning bid for the Jamesville Bridge was \$3,854.00, "less a rebate on material." (48) Local residents had contributed \$400.00 and labor for that project (49), and it is likely that a similar contribution was made by Hootentown residents. Court records for the period following construction of the Hootentown Bridge are not clear regarding subsequent maintenance and repair of the bridge.

C. Location

The Hootentown Bridge crosses the James River in Section 19, Township 26 North, Range 22 West. This portion of the James River Valley was initially settled between 1838 and 1855. (50) During this period, Benjamin H. and William C. Hooton (brothers?) brought their families to Stone County. (51) In 1858, Benjamin H. Hooton purchased approximately 80 acres in the vicinity of the bridge from Alexander and Phoebe Berry. (52) The Hooton family became long-term residents and their affiliation with the area is commemorated in the names of local landmarks, e.g., Hooten Hill (Section 25, Township 26 North, Range 23 West), Hootentown Natural Arch (Section 30, Township 26 North, Range 22) and Hooten Cave (Section 19, Township 26 North, Range 22). (53) Census, property, and cemetery records indicate that the family used a different spelling (Hooton) than that found in the county court records or on U.S.G.S. topographic maps. (54)

When the Hootons came to Stone County in the 1850s, the Lochner mill was operating some four miles upstream from Benjamin Hooton's farm. (55) A small community, first known as Robertson's Mills and later called Jamesville, developed in the vicinity of the 1850s' mill. (56) During the 19th century, two post offices served the area. One was located at Robertson's Mills, while the Sinclair Post Office was about a mill downstream (south) from the Hooton farm. By the 1890s, the Sinclair Post Office was defunct. (57)

While Jamesville appears on maps dating to the early twentieth century, Hootentown was not. (58) Indirect evidence suggests that "Hootentown" was a shortlived, twentieth century hamlet. All members of the Hooton family were farming at the turn of the century. (59) By 1910, the patriarch, William C. Hooton, is described as owning his property with no outstanding mortgages and living off his "own income". (60) Apparently, his eldest son, Albert H., operated the family farm which he rented from his father. (61) Another son, Felix, also rented his property and had a "shop." (62) A son-in-law of Felix, also lived in the area and worked as an engineer in a saw mill. (63) This conforms somewhat with a recent recollection of Hootentown which placed two general stores, a mill, and a blacksmith shop in the area during the 1930s. (64) In effect, the Hootentown Bridge may have been sought as a means of securing extant business and promoting future commercial development, i.e., tourism.

III. THE BRIDGE

A. Description

The Hootentown Bridge is a two-span, steel structure, with each span being an 8 panel pin-connected Parker through truss. Each span is 157' 6" long, making the entire bridge a length of 315 feet. The bridge is 12' wide (out to out), and 12' 7" high (vertical clearance over deck). Compression members in the truss include the top chords, end posts and verticals, except for the hip verticals (hangers) adjacent to the inclined end posts. Tension members include the diagonals, counters, and lower chords. The inclined end posts and inclined top chords have a steel channel, 7" tall on each side with a 2" flange, with a continuous steel plate 12" wide by 1.4" thick, riveted to the top and plate straps, 14-1/2" long by 2" wide by 3/8" thick, laced to the bottom at 8" on centers. The continuous steel plate riveted to the top has the word "CARNEGIE" stamped periodically along its length. The verticals are made of steel channels laced on both sides. The channels are 6" wide with a 2" flange, and are laced with riveted plate straps 11-1/2" long by 1-1/4" wide by 1/4" thick, at 6" on center.

The diagonals are double rectangular bars, each 2" by 1/2", and the counters are round bars, 7/8" in diameter, with turnbuckles to permit adjustment. The lower chords are double rectangular eyebars and are pin connected to the lower end of the verticals. At each of the bridge corners, the upper and lower chords meet at a pin connection. The hangers are made by taking two 2-1/2" by 2" angle irons, and riveting a 4" by 5" plate to the 2" flange at 31-1/2" on centers, thus making a channel that is 5" wide with a 2-1/2" flange.

The cross members at the top of each of the three interior panel points are made of angle iron. There are top and bottom horizontal pieces, with diagonal angle irons forming an "X" between the top and bottom, and a vertical angle iron bisecting the entire cross member.

The transverse floor beams occur at the seven interior bottom chord panels and are steel I-beams which are riveted to an extension of the verticals. The I-beams have a 12-1/4" web with a 5-1/4" flange. There are 8 longitudinal floor stringers, which consist of 12-1/2" by 4-1/4" wooden beams resting on the steel I-beams on their narrower side at approximately 20" on centers. The bridge deck is made of rough sawn timber planks, approximately 2-1/4" thick and 9-1/2" wide. They are laid transversely on their broader sides across the stringers and are nailed to the wood stringers. There is no curb on either side of the bridge. There is a running board for each wheeltrack,

approximately 20" wide for each wheel made of wooden planks, ranging from 2" thick by 6" wide to 2" thick by 12" wide. The guard rails along the bridge length are continuous 2-3/4" outside diameter steel pipe at 1' 8" and 3' 2" above the deck.

The bridge is supported at each end by cast-in-place concrete abutments and is supported in the middle by a cast-in-place concrete pier.

B. Modifications

At present, the only known modification to the bridge occurred in 1929, when it was removed from its original location at Galena. Although the number and types of trusses used in the 1910 construction of the wagon bridge have not been determined, a photograph taken in the 1920s suggest that at least three through trusses were present. (65) Two of these were used in building the Hootentown bridge. At that time, some of the hardware may have been replaced, a new wooden deck was installed and the bridge was repainted. Court records are unclear as to the date and nature of subsequent work (maintenance, repair, modifications) on the Hootentown Bridge. At some point during the mid-twentieth century, a temporary, vertical steel stub support was placed under the southeast corner of the steel truss on the east side.

C. Ownership and the Future

The Hootentown Bridge has been owned and maintained by Stone County since 1910. Presently, it is located on County Route 133. The Missouri Highways and Transportation Department's county bridge inventory number is 133000.3. In 1913, when the county court was contemplating placing a bridge at this location, it was called Hooten Ford. By 1929, court records and contemporary newspaper accounts refer to this as the Hootentown Bridge, its current designation.

An appraisal of the Hootentown Bridge indicated that it is badly deteriorated. The temporary vertical steel stub support, placed under the southeast corner of the steel truss on the east side, was not securely placed or seated. Thus, there is a potential for sudden failure of the steel truss. There is also extensive corrosion with some section loss, loose and unacceptable wood decking, loose bottom laterals, loose and bent lower diagonal tension bars, a spalled substructure, channel scour around a pier, and a substandard load rating. In addition, the narrow width of the bridge is sufficient for only one lane of traffic. These factors prompted the decision to replace the bridge. (66)

The Stone County Court has advertised the bridge's availability and is soliciting proposals from interested parties. The deadline for proposal submission is June 15, 1989. If an interested party is identified, the metal trusses will be matchmarked, disassembled, and removed. If no interested party is found, the bridge will be removed in accordance with standard specifications.

IV. BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

A. Western Bridge Company

There is little available data regarding this privately-owned business, which was located in Harrisonville, Missouri. The Western Bridge Company was the construction firm that first built the

bridge at Galena. However, court records (67) suggest that the "wagon bridge" at Galena was designed by J. H. Reser, Stone County highway engineer, while some, if not All, of the steel used in the bridge was fabricated by the Carnegie Steel Company of Pennsylvania.

B. O. K. Parsons

A Stone County native, Parsons was born on November 18, 1885, received his education in the county's school system and learned road and bridge construction through practical experience. He entered the business working for Fred Appleby, a contractor based in Springfield, Missouri. Subsequently employed by the Pioneer Construction Company, he worked on jobs in Missouri and adjoining states. By 1929, Parsons had established his own construction business and had built the Hootentown and Jamesville bridges for the county. He continued to do much of Stone County's road and bridge construction in subsequent years. (68)

In addition to his contracting business, Parsons also was a farmer and involved in local and state politics. An active member of the Republican party, Parsons served as justice of the peace in Stone County for ten years, circa 1910-1920; was a member of the Stone County Central Committee and a delegate to the congressional convention in 1920. In 1940, he was a delegate to the Missouri Republican State Convention and served as a judge of the Stone County Court, 1941-1942. Elected as a state representative in 1946, he served in the 64th General Assembly. At the time of his death on September 12, 1950, Parsons was engaged in farming and stock raising on his farm near Hurley. (69)

V. ENDNOTES

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